

# DFEH News Brief

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For Immediate Release

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## **\$55,000 IN DAMAGES AWARDED TO FORMER EMPLOYEE OF CAR DEALERSHIP IN DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION CASE**

ELK GROVE -- The Department of Fair Employment and Housing ("DFEH") today announced that the Fair Employment and Housing Commission (Commission) has awarded a Simi Valley man \$55,000 in emotional distress damages for discrimination he suffered while employed at a Simi Valley car dealership.

The Commission found that the former employee, who suffered from a disability, left leg amputation, was discriminated against and his former employer failed to provide a reasonable accommodation for his disability. Although the employer argued that the employee could not perform his job duties because he had to walk in and around the dealership offices and lot, the Commission found that he was able to perform his management duties as fleet sales manager. The Commission noted that the duties of a sales manager differed substantially from the duties of a retail car sales associate.

"This Commission decision sends a clear message that California employers have a responsibility to engage in the interactive process and to provide reasonable accommodation for an employee's disability," said DFEH Director Suzanne M. Ambrose. "Employers have a duty to maintain workplaces that are free from discrimination. The award in this case further emphasizes that employers will be held liable for failing to take this duty seriously."

In addition to the monetary damages, the Commission also ordered the company to pay lost wages, pay an administrative fine, and post notices acknowledging the employer's violation of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and informing employees of their rights under the FEHA. The Commission also ordered that the corporate president, directors and officers, managers and supervisors, and employees must attend a training program on disability-based employment discrimination, reasonable accommodation, and the interactive process. California law allows the employer to appeal the decision.

For more information about the work of the DFEH or the laws it enforces, including the Fair Employment and Housing Act, Unruh Civil Rights Act, and Ralph Act, call (800) 884-1684 (employment, public accommodation, hate violence; (800) 233-3212 housing; (800) 700-2320 TTY, or visit the DFEH's website: [www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov).

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